

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

TELLING THE STORY OF WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO
PUBLIC RELATIONS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THREE
PUBLIC RELATIONS INDUSTRY PUBLICATIONS, 2001-2005

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FUFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM

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MUNCIE, INDIANA

MAY 2009

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s, women played a large role in several professions previously dominated by men. One example of this is the major shift the public relations profession has experienced in the gender composition of its workforce. It is currently estimated women make up 70 percent of the field (Aldoory and Toth 2002). While some professionals and researchers cited the influx of women in the field as positive, arguing women are naturally suited for the profession because of their enhanced verbal skills and orientation toward relationships, many more concluded the increasing numbers of women choosing to pursue a career in public relations would negatively impact the field (Wilkes, Mitrook, and Cameron, 1993; Gruning, Toth, and Hon, 2000; Cline et al., 1986).

In 1984 the International Association of Business Communicators Foundation funded the Velvet Ghetto study, an investigation into the possible implications of the gender shift within public relations.

This study identified public relations as an increasingly feminized field that categorizes women in subordinate roles. It also examined how the public perceived a female-dominated field and stated that because of this the profession would never reach professional status and even might lose prestige (Cline et al., 1986).

In terms of sheer numbers, women have clearly surpassed men in public relations; however the inequality in the salary and status of male and female practitioners is well documented (Aldoory and Toth, 2002; Broom, 1982; Dozier, 1988; Toth and Aldoory, 2001; Toth and L., 1993; L.A., 1988; Toth, 1988, Toth & Cline, 1991; Toth, Serini, Wright and Emig, 1998; Wright, Springston, and Toth, 1991).

Various researchers from a number of different perspectives have studied the issue of gender equality among public relations professionals. Some of this research has examined gender disparities in the roles practitioners perform and the advancement potential available to them (Aldoory and Toth, 2002; Broom, 1982; Broom and Dozier, 1986; Dozier, 1983; Dozier, 1988; Broom and Dozier, 1995).

Other research has focused on the inequities in salary and job satisfaction (Jacobsen & Tortorello, 1990, 1991, 1992; Tortorello & Wilhelm, 1993; Toth & Cline, 1991; Toth & L.A. Grunig, 1993; Toth et al., 1998).

Additionally, these studies have found that gender is often accompanied by other variables to prevent women's

advancement into management (Broom, 1982; Broom & Dozier, 1986; Dozier, 1988; Dozier & Broom, 1995; Dozier et al, 1995).

These other variables may include age, professional experience, personal and family choices, etc. This extensive body of research confirms gender inequality within the field, which many believe is perpetuating the feminization of the field and causing greater devaluation of women in public relations and ultimately the field itself (Aldoory & Toth, 2002; Toth & Grunig, 1993; Hon, 1995).

This thesis attempted to validate previous research by expanding the scope of the research to include authorship in membership publications from public relations professional societies, the Public Relations Society of America and the International Association of Business Communicators. These publications are *The Strategist*, *Public Relations Tactics*, and *Communication World*.

These publications generally serve to frame and share the latest trends and issues of a particular field or industry for the members of these associations. They also help shape the reality of the industry through the topics, images and perspectives within the publications. The topics, images, and perspectives that are included in these publications could be viewed as representing what is thought to be important to the industry. Likewise, the

topics, images, and perspectives absent in these public relations trade publications could be interpreted as not important or necessary to the field of study. An examination of women's authorship in these publications, or the number of women authors can be measured and compared to the percentage of women in the field.

This study adds to the growing body of knowledge in the field of public relations by providing examining women's authorship in public relations membership publications. From this analysis inferences on women's current status within the field can be made and compared to earlier findings.

A profession's body of knowledge is the abstract knowledge needed by practitioners to perform the profession's work (Guerin and Martin, 2004). Abstract knowledge is not to be confused with the skills practitioners need or the tasks they are required to perform. It is the currency of a profession; it is what makes a profession legitimate and valued by the public.

Once the profession's body of knowledge is identified and developed, this knowledge can be communicated to other public relations practitioners as a form of professional development.

By knowing where the profession is today, based on the body of knowledge, the future and the path it needs to take to get there can be gauged. Additionally, it is important

to know how the profession defines itself in its own documents (Guerin and Martin, 2004).

Importance of Research

According to Aldoory and Toth (2002), 70 percent of public relations practitioners are female. Additionally, between 70 and 80 percent of public relations students are female (Cline, 1989; Grunig, Toth and Hon, 2000).

These numbers illustrate that women are clearly dominating the field, however the scholarly literature

indicates they are still discriminated against and devalued in the profession (Hon, Grunig, and Dozier 1992). Many researchers and practitioners alike have concluded that real change will not happen until there is a better understanding of, and appreciation for, the positive aspects female practitioners bring to organizations.

The greatest benefactors of this research will be the future practitioners of the field, especially females who are currently enrolled in undergraduate and graduate level public relations programs. An understanding of women's contributions to the profession is important for female students because it can provide a more complete picture of the profession than that of the one in the classroom.

Grunig, Toth and Hon (2000), suggested that the classroom is an appropriate setting for studying the implications of feminization on the field and go so far as to suggest that the empowerment of women through education

will lead the field to excellence. Learning the history of the profession, including the feminization of the industry, the roles women have played, and the contributions they have made to research can all provide a context for women's current status in the industry and may empower future practitioners.

While women may be most impacted by the gender inequality in public relations the devaluation that it causes is a key concern to all practitioners in the field.

Many professionals have indicated this should be a key focus of the field's professional organizations and that they can and should do more to fight the devaluation of public relations. By studying women's contributions to the membership publications of the discipline their status within the field can be further examined and improvements can be made if needed.

However, in order to understand the current state of public relations it is important to have some context on how the field has achieved its current status. To assess the degree to which primary research can help to supplement the study overall, a literature review was conducted. The following findings from scholarly and professional works help to form the research questions and offer expanded insights to the preceding research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The history of public relations activities can be traced back to ancient times. Historians point to Julius Caesar's publicizing of his military exploits to convince the Roman people that he would make the best head of state as one of the earliest forms of public relations (Bates, 2006). The concept of public relations spread to the United States during colonial times when oratory, newspapers, meetings, pamphlets, and other correspondence were used to win people to their cause. Examples of this correspondence include Thomas Paine's Common Sense and the Federalist Papers. However it wasn't until World War I that public relations fully developed as a profession in the United States. Many of the first public relations professionals, including Ivy Lee and Edward Bernays contributed to the Committee on Public Information (also known as the Creel Committee), which organized publicity on behalf of U.S. objectives during World War I (Bates, 2006).

During this time it was estimated that 17,000 men and 2,000 women were performing various public relations roles among corporations, government, non-profits, and agencies (Wilcox et al, 1998). Due to the expanding popularity of and demand for public relations, several organizations were founded to represent the interests of public relations practitioners and develop the profession culminating in 1948 with the formation of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA).

PRSA and organizations like it fulfilled several functions, primarily networking and professional development. They also aimed to raise the professional reputation of those working in the discipline and the field itself by establishing a code of ethics and accreditation programs, as well as, taking public positions on issues of professional or societal concern and promoting the value of the profession.

By the late 1960s, public relations had matured into a fully legitimized profession including, in the United States, several hundred firms and more than 100,000 individual practitioners. These practitioners became an integral part of top management, often reporting directly to the president or CEO of the institutions they served (Bates, 2006).

The 1970s also marked a significant transition in the profession. During this time women began to enter public relations at a much faster rate than men. The gender shift

became so dramatic it spawned studies like the Velvet Ghetto which identified public relations as an increasingly feminized field that categorizes women in technical roles and examined how the public perceived a female-dominated field (Cline et al., 1986).

The Feminization of Public Relations

The growing number of women in public relations was first publicly noted in 1978. *Business Week* magazine described public relations as "the velvet ghetto" of affirmative action because it said companies had begun loading their public relations departments with women as a way to fulfill affirmative action quotas.

Widely recognized within the industry for putting the spotlight on the issue of gender inequality within the public relations profession, the article began a debate over the feminization of the field.

This debate led researchers to investigate the cause and effect of this feminization while also trying to identify and label the roles and functions women were performing (Broom and Dozier, 1986; Cline et al., 1986; Dozier 1983; Toth and Cline, 1989; Toth and Grunig, 1993.)

The debate began as a result of the *Business Week* article also led to several benchmark studies on the impact of feminization in public relations including the Velvet Ghetto in 1984, and Beyond the Velvet Ghetto in 1989. Both of these studies concentrated on gender issues and

identified public relations as an increasingly feminized field that relegated women to subordinate roles. The report also examined how the public perceived a female-dominated field and stated that because of this the profession might lose prestige function and salaries would drop based on comparing histories of other feminized professions like nursing, education, and social work (Wilcox & Cameron, 2006).

Specifically, the Velvet Ghetto authors found that women were increasingly performing the role of communication technicians rather than supervisory managers and paid significantly less than their male counterparts. It also found that women felt there were several barriers preventing them from advancing in the field.

The 1989 Beyond the Velvet Ghetto report included additional themes concerning the feminization of the field of public relations. They included ways of promoting PR programs to qualified men and socialization theories as they relate to women and minorities in business communication and public relations. However, it ultimately found that the existence of the "velvet ghetto" was real and women were being discriminated against in terms of salary, job satisfaction, roles, and advancement.

The next study was conducted by the Public Relations Society of America in 2000. The Year 2000 Gender Study, as it was called, examined issues like salary, the existence of a "glass ceiling" for women, hiring, roles, job

satisfaction, leadership, and work family balance. PRSA had begun a series of trend studies, including the Year 2000 Gender Study, in 1990. The findings of this study were similar to the Velvet Ghetto series and indicated that there was a significant difference in the salary, promotion, and hiring. The study concluded that women were paid less than men, less likely to be promoted, and hired in at a staff position while many more men filled management positions. However, unlike the Velvet Ghetto studies, job satisfaction and leadership ability showed no significant difference between male and female professionals. The study ended with a list of recommendations for the Public Relations Society of America that might help reconcile the findings of the study.

In order to gauge progress, the authors compared the results of the Year 2000 study to those from 1995. Similar to the research that preceded it, the Year 2000 study concluded that the 'feminization' of the profession has led to inequalities among the sexes, as well as, the overall devaluation of the industry (Aldoory and Toth, 2002).

The findings of these studies show that women dominate the public relations field in terms of numbers of practitioners; however the inequities that existed between men and women in public relations are continuing and require additional research.

One of the earliest researchers to study the effect of gender equality on public relations was Glen Broom. In

1982 he concluded that four roles described the activities of public relations practitioners. These four roles included the expert prescriber, considered the resident expert on public relations matters; the communication technician, not involved in policy-making decisions but rather serve by carrying out specific assignments; the communication facilitator, serve as intermediaries between the organization and its various publics; and the problem-solving process facilitator, part of the management team and collaborate with other team members in tackling public relations issues.

He prefaced his conclusions with the idea that a professional plays all of the roles in varying degrees. However, he also found that men and women differed significantly to the extent to which they engaged in the four roles.

"About half of the women see themselves operating primarily in the communication technician role, while more than half of the men report the expert prescriber role as their dominant role." (Broom, 1982).

Broom's study encouraged others to expand on his initial findings. A 1983 report by David Dozier narrowed the four roles to two; manager and technician. Broom and Dozier (1986) studied how roles were linked to salary, but it was the link to gender that provided the

most surprising results. They found that not only were women playing the less prestigious and less powerful communication technician role with greater frequency, they were paid less than their male counterparts when playing either role.

The inequality in the roles of public relations practitioners is only a piece of the complex issue that is the feminization of the industry. A significant number of studies have shown that the feminization that has been creating an imbalance in terms of hiring, salary, and promotions in the industry has remained unchanged for many years (Broom, 1982; Cline et al, 1986; Dozier, 1983; Ferguson, 1987; Lukovitz, 1989; Matthews, 1988; Pratt, 1989; Toth, 1988; Toth & Cline, 1989; Toth & Grunig, 1993; Wright, Gruning, Springston, & Toth, 1991). More recent studies of the feminization of public relations have tried to construct theoretical propositions to help explain why these discrepancies exist in a female dominated field.

In 2002, Aldoory and Toth borrowed theories from other disciplines in an attempt to better explain the gender differences in public relations, but concluded that "public relations requires its own theory of gender discrimination in a gendered profession."

Since then there has been a significant amount of research that has sought to add to the theory of why gender

discrimination remains and issue within public relations (Dozier, Sha, and Okura, 2007; Sha and Toth, 2004; Sha et al., 2007).

*Women's Contribution to
Public Relations Publications*

During the exploration of the implications of feminization on the public relations profession, some researchers began to examine the research itself. They discovered another imbalance in the field, the majority of the research on gender issues in public relations was being conducted by men. A content analysis of eight communication journals showed males authored more than 60 percent of the published mass media research (Dupagne, Potter, and Cooper, 1993).

Adams and Bodle sought to validate the findings of Dupagne et al. by studying the authorship of refereed papers accepted to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) conventions from 1987 to 1993. The Adams and Bodle study confirmed the findings of Dupagne et al, and found that women still lagged behind men in their production of research papers. It also confirmed that Dupange's hypothesis that research productivity by women would continue to increase as more women entered the profession was accurate.

During the seven years Adams and Bodle studied they found the annual totals revealed a fairly consistent

increase in the percentage of articles produced by women. Since research presented at conventions often leads to what is printed in public relations journals, Adams and Bodle also predicted that an increase in women's published scholarship will be seen as well. Based on the suggestion of Adams and Bodle, and many others some researchers began to expand the list of publications they examined to include the industry's trade journals.

Curtin and Miller studied all of the editorial content by or about women in two public relations trade publications, *Tide* and the *Public Relations Journal*. They compared two publications during a twenty-year period and assessed how women contributed to and were portrayed in the public relations trade press. The study found that women were shown in a variety of roles and that there were vast differences between the two publications in regards to their coverage of women. They concluded that while women's contributions were included in both publications that over the trend over the period studied showed the increasing marginalization of women within the field.

The first publication, *Tide*, was a trade magazine for advertising executives that included coverage of public relations starting in 1946. The second publication, the *Public Relations Journal*, was the first trade magazine of public relations published in 1944. Women were depicted in both, but *Tide* showed them as both practitioners and as an audience.

In the *Public Relations Journal* the gender of practitioners was generalized and women were often shown as window-dressing. Trends over time also showed an increase in the marginalization of women in both publications (Curtin and Miller, 1998).

A 1999 study by O'Neil found women to be in a ghetto within a ghetto, meaning the messages communicated within the industry publication *The Strategist* keep women from rising to higher ranks within the profession.

"The *Strategist* relegation of the feminine voice is evidenced by the unequal representation of men and women as contributors, as well as, the emphasis placed on the masculine values of individualism, competitiveness, and objectivity." (O'Neil 1999).

She reviewed women's presence in *The Strategist* from a feminist perspective. According to the author, examining the publication this way validated the importance of women's contributions in the profession. She sought to find a connection between the messages from *The Strategist* and women's status within public relations. She concluded that readers of *The Strategist* would see a lack of female representation in authorship, in management profiles, and in overall voice.

In 2001, University of Alabama professor, Karla Gower, also examined the topic of feminist scholarship; however she focused her research exclusively on women's representation in the *Public Relations Journal*. Gower

analyzed the journal from its first issue in 1945 until 1972 when the first female was elected to serve as chairman of the industry's professional organization, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). During the time period she studied, Gower found 2,260 articles with bylines appearing in the *Public Relations Journal* and of those women authored 100. Nine additional articles specifically dealt with women practicing public relations and eleven other articles focused on woman as a public.

This disparity in representation suggests the level of acceptance women received from their male counterparts in the industry, according to Gower. She concluded that women were initially accepted into the trade because it was new, yet as it matured, males tended to dominate despite the rising number of women practitioners.

These studies have examined the genders of the authors published in public relations journals and trade magazines and found that women seem to be either missing or not accurately represented. However, none of the research has examined women's contribution to the publications of the membership organizations of the industry.

Public Relations Professional Societies

Since nearly the beginning of the profession, public relations practitioners have utilized professional organizations to enhance their professionalism and boost the public image of the profession.

The largest of these organizations is the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). Formed in 1948 when the American Council of Public Relations merged with the National Association of Public Relations.

The second largest and prominent organization for public relations professionals, The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), was formed in 1970.

These professional associations offer significant services to their members. Associations publish magazines like the ones analyzed in this study to inform those working in the profession of events, techniques, and other professional issues.

They also facilitate less formal communications through membership mailing lists, and offer opportunities to interact with individuals with similar interests via member conferences, chapter meetings and other networking events. Professional associations may also institute mechanisms to publicize the achievements of particular members, like the Silver Anvil and the Gold Quill.

In addition to serving their members, professional societies also provide sustained leadership and direction for the entire profession. For instance, they take public positions on issues of professional or societal concern.

Societies may also form task forces to investigate environmental changes that will impact the profession; an example is the Velvet Ghetto study funded by IABC or the

salary studies funded by PRSA. Professional associations can also facilitate or influence the direction of research or educational matters that relate to the profession. For example, the PRSA Advocacy Board strives not only to enhance awareness of the importance of public relations, but also to make significant contributions to public discourse on issues that affect the profession directly.

The most recent example of this occurred during the 2008 Presidential Campaign when PRSA challenged both the McCain and Obama campaigns to commit to the highest standards of ethical practice in every facet of their campaign communications.

Although these organizations exist to advance the public relations profession and the public relations professional, participation in them is not mandatory to the profession. They do, however, represent and promote the industry to the outside world. One way they accomplish this is through the publications they produce.

Why trade publications?

Trade publications, including the membership publications published by membership societies or professional organizations, can play a large role in the process of educating and developing public relations professionals.

These publications are intended to connect a community working in particular industry, occupation, or profession. They give practical information to people in the industry as well as showcase trends and leading professionals in the field. They can be useful when doing an analysis of a particular industry or when a professional is applying for a job or preparing for an interview.

For decades in the twentieth century, the major public relations trade journals were membership publications. At the time these were the only publications specifically for practitioners. Today's professionals have many more choices for news and knowledge related to the field, however many still receive much of their information from membership publications.

Research Questions

Based on the literature reviewed the following research questions were formulated.

RQ1: What was the number of articles authored by males versus the number of articles authored by females in the issues of *The Strategist* examined?

RQ2: What was the number of articles authored by males versus the number of articles

authored by females in the issues of *Public Relations Tactics* studied?

RQ3: What was the number of articles authored by males versus the number of articles authored by females in the issues of *Communication World* studied?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of this study was to analyze the gender of the authors published in three publications of two of the industry's professional organizations. This was accomplished by examining the author's name and the biography that accompanies each article. This chapter presents the methods used in conducting this analysis in the publications published from 2001 to 2005. After restating the research questions of this study, this chapter provides a discussion on content analyses, an explanation of the units of analyses, reasons for the population chosen, and intercoder reliability.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What was the number of articles authored by males versus the number of articles authored by females in the issues of *The Strategist* examined?

RQ2: What was the number of articles authored by males versus the number of articles authored by females in the issues of *Public Relations Tactics* studied?

RQ3: What was the number of articles authored by males versus the number of articles authored by females in the issues of *Communication World* studied?

Methodology

All issues of *The Strategist*, *Public Relations Tactics*, and *Communication World* from 2001 to 2005 were examined in this study. These publications were chosen because they are the publications produced by the two largest professional organizations serving public relations practitioners.

The Strategist publishes four times a year, *Public Relations Tactics* is a monthly publication that includes twelve issues a year, and *Communication World* publishes bimonthly issues.

In 2004 *The Strategist* did not publish a winter publication, therefore only three issues were analyzed that year. In total, 1473 articles were analyzed from 19 issues of *The Strategist*, 60 issues of *Tactics*, and 29 issues of *Communication World*. The unit of analysis was each author's gender.

The publications were analyzed to see if the feminization that exists in the public relations industry was reflected in the industry's publications.

For the purpose of this study, the content analysis method was used to code the issues of *The Strategist*, *Tactics*, and *Communication World* because it involves the

quantifying of certain elements in a photograph and in text to answer the research questions/hypotheses.

According to Wimmer and Dominick's research, a content analysis is defined as: a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systemic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables. First, content analysis is systemic.

This means that the content to be analyzed is selected according to explicit and consistently applied rules.

Sample selection must follow proper procedures, and each item must have an equal chance of being included in the analysis. "There must be uniformity in the coding and analysis procedures and in the length of time coders are exposed to the material." (Wimmer and Dominick, 141).

Second, content analysis is objective, that is researcher's personal idiosyncrasies and biases should not enter into the findings. If replicated by another researcher, the analysis should yield the same results.

Third, content analysis is quantitative. The goal of content analysis is the accurate representation of a body of messages. Quantification is important in fulfilling that objective, because it aids researchers in the quest for precision. Additionally, quantification allows researchers to summarize results and to report them succinctly.

Finally, quantification gives the researchers additional statistical tools that can aid in interpretation and analysis. (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003).

Sampling Selection

The publications of the industry's professional association were chosen because previous studies cited them as a consideration for future research (Carroll, 2002; Curtin and Miller, 1998; O'Neil, 1999). *The Strategist*, *Public Relations Tactics*, and *Communication World* were chosen because they are the primary publications of the industry's largest trade groups, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). Both of these organizations have added additional online publications; however this study only includes print publications available between 2001 and 2005. This time period was studied because it provided a recent five year sample.

The Coding Instrument

A coding instrument was designed to document the analyzed issues. The instrument was adapted from the coding instrument used by Hardin, Dodd and Chance's (2004) study of race in newspaper coverage of the 2000 Olympic Games. The coding instrument (see Appendix A - D) was adapted to code the articles using the following categorical variables: (a) month or issue of the publication; (b) year of the publication; and (c) gender of author(s).

A second coder was recruited and trained in order to ensure the reliability of the study. Intercoder reliability

was defined by Wimmer and Dominick (2003) as the degree of agreement between or among independent coders. The second coder analyzed twenty four articles, two of each publication from each year to contribute to the study. After the coding process was complete, intercoder reliability was calculated using Holsti's formula, which states: $\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$ "where M is the number of coding decisions on which two coders agree, and N1 and N2 are the total number of coding decisions by the first and second coder" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). Using that formula, the total number of coding decisions that were taken amounted to 40. The instances where at least two coders agreed amounted to 38. Thus, using Holsti's formula, intercoder reliability in this study equaled .97.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

One thousand four hundred seventy three articles were studied in three respected public relations industry publications. Each publication contains its unique mission, editorial board, and targeted audience. These variances created differences in the number of articles per volume, as well as, the proportionate length of articles varies from issue to issue among three publications studied. And, as stated earlier each publication is published with differing frequency and contains a different mission. This made it difficult to compare volumes within a publication or to compare one publication to another.

Overall Representation of Authors in *The Strategist*

RQ1: What was the number of articles authored by males versus the amount of articles authored by females in the issues of *The Strategist* studied?

There was a significant difference in the number of articles authored by each gender in *The Strategist*. Of the articles studied, more articles were authored by males than females. In total, 69 of *The Strategist* articles were authored by females, while 114 articles were authored by males. The gender of an additional 23 articles could not be

identified. As you can see in the table below, the differences between the genders remained fairly consistent from 2001 through 2005.

TABLE 1 OVERALL NUMERIC REPRESENTATION OF MALE AND FEMALE AUTHORS FROM 2001 TO 2005 IN THE STRATEGIST						
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
Male	20	17	33	19	25	114
Female	12	9	14	15	19	69

Articles authored by males outnumbered those authored by female authors during the period studied by more than 24 percent.

The Strategist is the only publication available that targets executive-level public relations practitioners. Mailed quarterly to PRSA members, the publication's mission is to allow "expert contributors to engage in intelligent, well-reasoned debate and insightful commentary concerning the most pressing public relations issues of the time."

Overall Representation of Authors in Public Relations Tactics

RQ2: What was the number of articles authored by males versus the amount of articles authored by females in the issues of *Public Relations Tactics* studied?

The answer to research question two is also yes. Similar to *The Strategist*, *Public Relations Tactics* is published by PRSA. *Tactics* is different from *The Strategist*

in that it is published 12 times a year and is targeted to all levels and roles within the profession. Since its target audience is the entire public relations profession it would seem reasonable to hypothesize that *Tactics* would be more likely to represent the current landscape of the public relations industry. However, that was not the conclusion in this instance. Just like *The Strategist* more articles in *Public Relations Tactics* were authored by males than females.

In total, 293 articles were authored by females, while 379 articles were authored by males. The gender of an additional 84 articles could not be identified. As you can see in the table below, the differences between the genders remained fairly consistent except in 2004 when both genders wrote an equal amount of articles.

TABLE 2 Overall numeric representation of male and female authors from 2001 to 2005 in <i>Tactics</i>						
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
Male	85	67	71	70	86	379
Female	75	49	39	70	60	293

For this publication, the amount of articles authored by males outnumbers those authored by females by 13 percent over the five year period.

Overall Representation of Authors in Communication World

RQ3: What was the number of articles authored by males versus the amount of articles authored by females in the issues of *Communication World* studied?

The answer to research question three is also yes. *Communication World* is the primary publication of IABC and provides readers with the current best practices and insights from industry thought lists. *Communication World* is published six times a year however it includes more articles per issue than either *The Strategist* or *Public Relations Tactics*.

Just like *The Strategist* and *Public Relations Tactics* more articles were authored by males than females, except in 2004 when women authored 14 more articles than did men.

This publication was the only one of the three analyzed that contained a year where women authored more articles than their male counterparts. This only occurred in 2004 and no conclusion as to why can be drawn.

In total, 191 articles were authored by females, while 218 articles were authored by males. The gender of an additional 102 articles could not be identified. For this publication, the amount of articles authored by males outnumbers those authored by females by 14 percent during the five years studied.

TABLE 3						
Overall numeric representation of male and female authors from 2001 to 2005 in <i>Communication World</i>						
2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total	

Male	38	37	33	45	65	218
Female	27	32	28	59	45	191

Based on the results of this study, the authors who contributed to the three publications do not reflect the demographic makeup of the industry. In its 2000 Salary Study, PRSA indicated that the demographic makeup of the profession equaled 70 percent women and 30 percent men.

The percentages of female authors found in either the PRSA publications or the IABC publication are well below 70 percent.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It was the goal of this research to validate earlier research by expanding the scope to include women's contribution to the membership publications from two public relations professional societies, the Public Relations Society of America and the International Association of Business Communicators. The research topic was of interest because of the overwhelming number of women currently in the field and had been identified as an area of future research in multiple studies (Adams and Bodle, 1995; Aldoory, 1997; Gower, 2001; O'Neil, 1999).

This study found that from 2001 - 2005 men consistently authored more articles than women in the membership publications that were analyzed. While compared to the findings of previous studies, these results show that women have made some progress in their contributions to the publications of the field. However, they have not yet equaled the contributions of their male counterparts, and certainly are not seen as dominating the authorship within the publications.

Similar to the way women have been slow to close the gaps in other areas within the field over time, the results of this study concluded they are not yet achieved equal status within the membership publications of the field. These findings are important because as the literature

review revealed, analyzing the authorship of women in the membership publications of the professional societies of public relations allows another opportunity to gauge and benchmark women's status within the field.

Based on the literature review, women's relegated status within public relations publications has been present nearly as long as women have been in the field. Curtin and Miller indicated that while there were vast differences in how women were portrayed in the publications they studied, women were marginalized in both. Gower's study examined the authorship of the articles exclusively, and examined a different publication than those in Curtin and Miller's research. Despite these differences here findings showed a similar absence of women. O'Neil's analysis of yet another public relations publication concluded similar findings and she connected women's absence in the publication as a driver in keeping them from advancing there status within the field.

That the disparity in the contributions of practitioners continues in a time when females make up the majority of the fields workforce, seems to imply that O'Neil's findings were accurate and that the lack of female representation is impacting women's status within the field. This is important not only for the satisfaction and diversity of the current makeup of the field, but also the status and evolution of the profession into the future.

Females continue to enter the field at more than three times the rate of males and they may not be gaining an accurate representation of women's current status within public relations or the issues within the profession attributed to the dominance of women in the field (Wilkes, Mitrook, and Cameron, 1993).

Including more women authors in the publications of public relations professional societies would allow more women's voices and experiences to be included. Both, students and practicing professionals could learn from an inclusion of diverse perspectives. Ultimately, more women authors would reflect the reality of the field.

While gender inequality was evident to an extent in the authorship of articles examined in this study, it was not as prevalent as expected based on previous research. This may show that women may be gaining acceptance in the field. However, these results only extend to the three publications examined and might not be similar if studying other public relations publications.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A few limitations existed throughout the course of the research that may lead to recommendations for future research.

The first limitation is the sample size that was analyzed. The findings of this study represent only a small sample of the publications they studied and therefore cannot

be generalized across all public relations industry publications. Further studies must be done to examine the relationship between gender and authorship in additional publications as well as in different time periods and across different industry associations. While this study examined the publications of the two largest public relations professional associations there are many additional professional entities that practitioners belong to and participate in, some serving an international membership. One recommendation would be to duplicate this study with publications from several of the larger international associations.

An additional limitation of this study is that it only measured the impact of women on the profession through public relations industry publications. Future studies could measure the impact of women on the public relations profession by examining human resources and general management publications.

The final major limitation of this research was that only the authors' gender was analyzed. A more comprehensive content analysis may have looked at not only the authors' gender, but also the subject matter of the articles. In this case, it would be important to understand if the number of articles on strategy by women increased over time. This would provide insights into whether or not women have moved out of tactical roles.

Appendix A: The Strategist Codebook: Author Gender

Instructions: Code each author separately. If an individual authors more than one article in an issue code each article separately.

Month/Issue

Indicate the issue of *The Strategist* by quarter

Code	Description
01	Winter
02	Spring
03	Summer
04	Fall

Year

Indicate the issue of *The Strategist* by year

Code	Description
01	2001
02	2002
03	2003
04	2004
05	2005

Gender

Indicate whether you are coding a female or male author. If there is more than one author, code each author. In the rare instance where you cannot be sure of gender or there is no author listed, code that as "Unknown."

Code	Description
01	Male
02	Female
03	Unknown

Appendix B: Public Relations Tactics Codebook:

Author Gender

Instructions: Code each author separately. If an individual authors more than one article in an issue code each article separately.

Month/Issue

Indicate the issue of *Tactics* by month

Code	Description
01	January
02	February
03	March
04	April
05	May
06	June
07	July
08	August
09	September
10	October
11	November
12	December

Year

Indicate the issue of *Public Relations Tactics* by year.

Code	Description
01	2001
02	2002
03	2003
04	2004
05	2005

Gender

Indicate whether you are coding a female or male author. If there is more than one author, code each author. In the rare instance where you cannot be sure of gender or there is no author listed, code that "Unknown."

Code	Description
01	Male
02	Female
03	Unknown

Appendix C: Communication World Codebook: Author
Gender

Instructions: Code each author separately. If an individual authors more than one article in an issue only code each article separately.

Month/Issue

Indicate the issue of *Communication World* by month.

Code	Description
01	Dec./Jan.
02	Feb./Mar.
03	Apr./May
04	Jun./Jul.
05	Aug./Sep.
06	Oct./Nov.

Year

Indicate the issue of *Communication World* by year.

Code	Description
01	2001
02	2002
03	2003
04	2004
05	2005

Gender

Indicate whether you are coding a female or male author. If there is more than one author, code each author. In the rare instance where you cannot be sure of gender or there is no author listed, code that as "Unknown."

Code	Description
01	Male
02	Female
03	Unknown

Appendix D: The Strategist - Author Code Sheet

Coder :

Date:

Appendix F: Communication World - Author Code
Sheet

Coder :

Date:

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